

Five Components of Reading

Vocabulary

Description

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively. In general, vocabulary can be described as oral vocabulary or reading vocabulary. Oral vocabulary refers to words that we use in speaking or recognize in listening. Reading vocabulary refers to words we recognize or use in print (*Put Reading First*, p. 34).

How Vocabulary Supports a Comprehensive Reading Program

- Vocabulary is important to reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As students learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of the new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary (*Put Reading First*, p. 34).
- The scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that (1) most vocabulary is learned indirectly, and (2) some vocabulary must be taught directly (*Put Reading First*, p. 35).
- Students learn vocabulary indirectly when they hear and see words used in many different contexts – for example, through conversations with adults, through being read to, and through reading extensively on their own (*Put Reading First*, p. 35).
- Students learn vocabulary directly when they are explicitly taught both individual words and word-learning strategies (*Put Reading First*, p. 35).
- Research indicates that students need to add at least 2000 to 3000 words to their reading vocabularies each year. Students develop vocabulary through wide reading and explicit vocabulary instruction. When teachers focus on specific words and their meanings, all students, including English Language Learners, benefit (Teacher Reading Academies).

Scientifically Based Reading Research Related to Vocabulary

- Explicit vocabulary instruction leads to gains in comprehension (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982; Nagy, 1988).
- Vocabulary can be learned incidentally in the context of storybook reading or from listening to the reading of others (Schwanenflugel, Stahl, & McFall, 1997; Robbins and Ehri, 1994).
- Pre-instruction of vocabulary words prior to reading can facilitate both vocabulary acquisition and comprehension (Brett, Rothlein, & Hurley, 1996; Wixon, 1986; Carney, Anderson, Blackburn, & Blessing, 1984).
- Repeated exposure to vocabulary items is important for learning gains (Leung, 1992).



- The restructuring of text materials or procedure facilitates vocabulary acquisition and comprehension (Eldredge, 1990; Scott and Nagy, 1997; Kameenui, Carnine, & Freschi, 1982).

Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002.

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